

Philadelphia, the largest city in the country without ANY public access channels, is home to Comcast- and although they may provide jobs for some of my fellow citizens, I do not agree with any of their unethical business practices. This company has no interest in serving the public are being accountable to the companies in which it has a complete monopoly (please do not pretend that satellite providers are actually competitors in the cable industry).

I used to have Comcast, but refuse to give them over \$100 each month for cable and internet. I have since dropped my cable subscription- so now I am left with very few stations- all of whom are owned by entertainment companies that have completely left the idea of "community programming" in the dust. When I did have Comcast, their service was horrible and you could never get a straight answer. I do not think that my bill was ever sent to me with the correct charges and when you would call to discuss it with them, you couldn't even find the number in which to call and complain. And there isn't anywhere else you can go to demand quality service.

Also, I am well aware that communities where there are more than one cable providers, the average price is 15% lower than where one company has a monopoly. That would provide competitive practices and better quality service.

And on top of that, I can not believe that the government is threatening to take away communities right to control their own franchise agreements. We barely have any ability to hold these (Comcast, primarily) companies accountable as it, and if you take away our right to demand a fair franchise agreement within our communities, you might as well take away the last little bit of democracy left in the media.

The following message is from Free Press and I agree with it wholeheartedly and I hope you take my concerns seriously. I did not write this for my health and would appreciate that the FCC does its job and protects the public's interest.

Thank you very much.

A concerned citizen and fighter for MEDIA DEMOCRACY,
Amy Johnson

Giant cable companies should not be permitted to grow larger. Further consolidation in the cable industry is a clear violation of horizontal ownership rules that must be re-established to serve the public interest.

The concentration of power and control over distribution of media is a growing problem in this country. Though we have more channels available than ever before, they are under the operation of a handful of giant corporations.

If Comcast and Time Warner are allowed to merge with Adelphia, the two companies will control nearly 50 percent of the national market. This level of concentration in the cable industry will lead to higher consumer rates and lower quality service.

Since passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 and the \"deregulation\" of cable, consumers have seen their rates jump an average of 59 percent -- with some areas experiencing even more dramatic increases.

We are required to buy channels we don't want or need because the cable operators bundle them together. The quality of customer service often reflects the fact that cable television is not a competitive market.

Meanwhile, the cost of cable modem service remains out of reach for many households, holding constant for years and selectively underserving rural and low-income Americans. The American people are watching the digital divide widen even as the need for access to high-speed networks increases.

Cable companies have become less responsive to the needs and requirements of communities. The quality of public accountability in local franchise agreements has declined, as big companies leverage their power to squeeze local governments.

In many communities, the truly independent sources of local news, information and culture come from the public channels produced at the local access centers. Unfortunately, local channels lack the resources to produce the programming that citizens want and need.

The last thing we need is to reward the anti-competitive actions of cable giants by permitting greater consolidation in ownership, reducing competition, and

encouraging more of the same.